United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ United Nations involvement in El Salvador has been "pioneering experience" in post-conflict peace-building, Secretary-General states at ceremony in San Salvador marking end to conflict in that country.

+ Twenty-two foreign ministers to attend tomorrow's meeting in Geneva of Steering Committee of International Conference on Former Yugoslavia; United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights situation in former Yugoslavia requests investigation in reports of mass graves in Croatia.

+ World Food Programme to send 100 long-haul trucks and trailers from Ethiopia and Eritrea to speed up delivery of relief food to people in Somalia; Finland contributes $700,000 to Trust Fund for Somalia.

+ Senegal asks for inclusion of additional item on General Assembly's agenda entitled: "Convening of an international conference on Somalia".

+ Number of Cambodian voters registered to take part in elections next year expected to pass 4 million mark today or tomorrow; number of political parties reaches 20.

+ As environment has deteriorated, international cooperation has improved, head of United Nations Environment Programme says at launch of report entitled The World Environment 1972-1992: Two Decades of Challenge.

+ Major-General Trond Furuhovde of Norway appointed Commander of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon with effect from 23 February 1993, replacing Lieutenant-General Lars-Eric Wahlgren of Sweden.

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For the United Nations, involvement in El Salvador has been a pioneering experience -- the first in a new generation of United Nations operations whose purpose was post-conflict peace-building, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said today in a statement at the ceremony in San Salvador marking the end of the 12-year armed conflict in that country.

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For information media—not an official record

Following a year without armed combat, he said, El Salvador had "crossed the line from armed peace into a new era". Monitoring of respect for human rights was an important element of the work of the United Nations in El Salvador, as was the reunification of the Salvadoran society -- a goal which was "still not within reach". He warned that there were Salvadorans "who continue to fight the war in their hearts", and urged the parties to the peace agreement "to give the example" by complying scrupulously with their solemn undertakings and play a "determined, active role in assisting the process of detente and reconciliation".

In addition to the verification of respect for human rights, the Secretary-General said the United Nations was variously involved in a complex and integrated set of tasks, including assisting the national police and monitoring of its activities, the creation of a new National Civil Police, and verification of the transition to a "new, leaner Armed Forces".

In closing, Mr. Boutros-Ghali said he and the Security Council placed the greatest emphasis on the consolidation of stable conditions following the definitive end of the armed conflict. However, he cautioned, "the primary responsibility lies with the Salvadorans".

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Almost two dozen foreign ministers will be attending tomorrow's meeting in Geneva of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. Only China and the Russian Federation will be represented at a lower level, because - according to the Spokesman for the Co-Chairmen of the Conference - the two countries will be holding bilateral talks at that time.

The meeting, the Spokesman indicated, was part of the ongoing effort to build consensus on ways to solve the problems of the former Yugoslavia. The participants will be addressed by the Co-Chairmen, Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, and hear briefings from the Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), General Satish Nambiar, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, and the Chairman of the Conference's Working Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Martti Ahtisaari.

Following the meeting, Mr. Vance will be coming to New York to consult with the Secretary-General and then return to Geneva over the weekend. The Secretary-General announced during a press conference yesterday that he plans to go to Geneva before the end of the year, to participate in discussions on the former Yugoslavia.

In a separate development, the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights on the human rights situation in the former Yugoslavia, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, has requested Bacre Waly Ndiaye, Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, to carry out preliminary investigations on his behalf into alleged sites of mass graves in Croatia.

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Mr. Ndiaye will travel to the area tomorrow, Wednesday, 16 December, and is expected to return to Geneva before 25 December. His findings will be included in Mr. Mazowiecki's report to the forthcoming forty-ninth session of the Human Rights Commission.

These preliminary inquiries are to be carried out in parallel with an in-depth investigation by a team of forensic experts into a mass grave at Ovcara, in United Nations Protected Area (UNPA), which was discovered recently. The in-depth investigation is conducted under the responsibility of the Commission of Experts established in accordance with Security Council resolution 780 (1992)

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The World Food Programme (WFP) today announced that it is sending 100 long-haul trucks and trailers to speed up delivery of relief food to people in the country, once roads and extended delivery points are secure. The WFP would immediately airlift 20 of the trucks to Mogadishu from Ethiopia, starting tomorrow, Wednesday 16 December.

"Now that we are able to deliver food into Mogadishu, it is critical that we have enough reliable trucks to move into the interior of Somalia where people are in the greatest need", said WFP Executive Director Catherine Bertini. This truck fleet has been working inside Ethiopia and Eritrea for the last seven years, delivering more than 2.3 million metric tonnes of food.

Meanwhile, a United Nations spokesman today said the Government of Finland has made a $700,000 contribution to the Trust Fund for Somalia. The Trust Fund was created under Security Council resolution 794 of 3 December, calling on all Member States, which were in a position to do so, to provide military forces and to make additional contributions in cash or in kind.

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Senegal has asked for the inclusion of an additional item on the General Assembly's agenda entitled: "Convening of an international conference on Somalia".

In an aide-mémoire to the General Assembly, dated 10 December, Abdou Diouf, the President of Senegal and the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), proposed that the General Assembly urgently establish the means whereby the Secretary-General might "exploit all the possibilities made available to him for the purpose of promoting a comprehensive and final settlement of the grave crisis" in Somalia.

According to a draft resolution submitted by Senegal, the international peace conference on Somalia would be held under United Nations auspices and in cooperation with the OAU, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries, among others. The text noted that the restoration of much-needed peace and stability in Somalia depended on a cease-fire under international observation, national

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reconciliation among the various factions, and preparation and organization of free and fair elections in Somalia under the supervision of the international community.
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The number of Cambodian voters equipped with their registration cards for the elections next year was expected to pass the 4 million mark today or tomorrow, the spokesman for the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) reported today. The pace of voter registration had slowed recently, he said, but in certain provinces 96 per cent of those eligible had already been registered. According to the Election Council, of the 1,800,000 Cambodians entered into the system, there were 140,000 more women than men.

Updated UNTAC figures, he said, showed that 15,608 United Nations peacekeepers from 32 Member States were now active in the country. The total number of political parties registered to take part had reached 20.

Answering questions about the police and military situation in the country, the spokesman said that UNTAC chief Yasushi Akashi had announced that the creation of a special inter-component prosecutor's office was being considered. Protection for political party workers and offices was also an issue, probably involving the support of the Civilian Police component. With the voter registration process coming to an end, that could be done more easily. "We have to put a stop to these attacks," he said.

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With the state of the environment worse than it was 20 years ago, Governments had come to understand that they had to work together or sink together, Mostafa K. Tolba, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), said at the launching of an 884-page report entitled The World Environment 1972-1992: Two Decades of Challenge.

However, he pointed out that it was not enough for Governments to sign international agreements; those had to be followed by implementation of practical measures to protect the environment. The good news was that in the 20 years since UNEP was established in Nairobi, following the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, public awareness of the magnitude of environmental problems had grown. It was understood now that international cooperation was the only solution.

Outlining some the agency's achievements, Mr. Tolba said the UNEP had initiated legislation and funding mechanisms to deal with global problems. New ground in environmental law had been broken two weeks ago in Denmark on the Montreal Protocol, with regard to phasing out damaging substances and establishing a permanent fund for technology transfer to developing countries. Last week, in Uruguay, progress had been made in prohibiting the transfer of hazardous wastes from one country to another.

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Mr. Tolba, who is stepping down at the end of this month after 17 years at the helm of UNEP, believes that the key to the agency's success has been to seek the highest scientific expertise and to make sure the science was right before drafting agreements.

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Major-General Trond Furuhovde of Norway has been appointed Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) with effect from 23 February 1993. He will replace Lieutenant-General Lars-Eric Wahlgren of Sweden, who has served as Commander of UNIFIL since July 1988 and who will be returning to his national service.

General Furuhovde joined the Norwegian armed forces in 1960. From 1981 to 1983 he commanded an infantry battalion in north Norway, and then served as Commandant of the School of Infantry and Winter Warfare until 1985. He was a brigade commander from 1985 to 1988, when he was appointed Chief of Staff of UNIFIL. The following year he served as Inspector of Infantry, and then as Commander of the Oestoppland Land Defence District.

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